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Tuna Newsletter

National Marine Fisheries Service
- Southwest Region
- Southwest Fisheries Science Center

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U.S. TUNA STATISTICS

Editor's note: The following articles were prepared by NMFS personnel from data and information gathered from sources in the U.S. tuna industry and government.

U.S. CANNED TUNA INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS, FIRST QUARTER 1994

Total receipts of tuna by U.S. canners during the first quarter of 1994 (January-March) increased by 14% to the equivalent of 109,400 short tons (st) of whole fish (round weight), compared to the first quarter of 1993 (Table 1). The principal species received was skipjack tuna with 50% of the total, followed by yellowfin tuna and albacore, with 27% and 23% of the total, respectively. Yellowfin tuna and albacore receipts were up by 40% and 36%, respectively, for the quarter, while skipjack tuna receipts were down by 3%.

Although the vast majority of tuna received by U.S. canners is whole fish, some quantity of tuna is received as loins or gilled- and-gutted. The ratio of tuna loins to total receipts for the first quarter of 1994 was 8%, compared to 4% for the first quarter of 1993. (The round weight totals used above were approximated by converting weights of loins and gilled-and-gutted receipts by factors of 2.25 and 1.11, respectively. For the remainder of this article, unconverted receipts are used unless otherwise stated.)

Receipts of tuna in American Samoa and California for the first quarter of 1994 were up by 21%, compared to the first quarter of 1993, reflecting increases in receipts of all three tuna species (Table 2). Receipts in Puerto Rico were down by 2%, with increases in albacore and

Table 1. Total U.S. cannery receipts (st) by species for the first quarters of 1993 and 1994. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Jan-Mar	Type	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL
1993	ROUND	18,800	49,900	18,400	87,100
	GILLED & GUTTED	*	*	300	300
	LOIN	0	2,800	1,000	3,800
	TOTAL (as received)	18,800	52,700	19,600	91,200
	TOTAL (estimated round wt)[2]	18,800	56,200	20,900	95,900
1994	ROUND	25,600	46,200	20,400	92,200
	GILLED & GUTTED	*	*	300	300
	LOIN	0	3,700	3,800	7,500
	TOTAL (as received)	25,600	49,900	24,500	100,000
	TOTAL (estimated round wt)[2]	25,600	54,600	29,300	109,400

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

[2]Converted to round weight by using factors of 1.11 for gilled-and-gutted and 2.25 for loins.

Table 2. U.S. cannery receipts (st) of domestic and imported tuna by species for the first quarters of 1993, 1994 and the recent (1989-93) first quarter averages. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Jan-Mar	Source	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL
		AMERICAN SAMOA & CALIFORNIA			
1993	DOMESTIC	800	29,000	5,200	35,000
	IMPORTED	5,400	3,700	1,400	10,500
	TOTAL	6,100	32,800	6,600	45,500
1994	DOMESTIC	200	28,700	5,500	34,400
	IMPORTED	10,100	6,200	4,400	20,600
	TOTAL	10,300	34,900	9,900	55,000
1989-93 Average	DOMESTIC	2,200	24,500	8,700	35,500
	IMPORTED	6,500	7,000	2,000	15,600
	TOTAL	8,700	31,500	10,800	51,000
		PUERTO RICO			
1993	DOMESTIC	500	12,400	5,000	18,000
	IMPORTED	12,100	7,500	8,000	27,700
	TOTAL	12,700	19,900	13,000	45,600
1994	DOMESTIC	100	5,100	4,700	9,900
	IMPORTED	15,200	10,000	9,900	35,100
	TOTAL	15,300	15,100	14,600	44,900
1989-93 Average	DOMESTIC	100	4,800	6,500	11,500
	IMPORTED	13,500	14,500	10,700	38,700
	TOTAL	13,700	19,300	17,200	50,200
		TOTAL			
1993	DOMESTIC	1,300	41,400	10,200	53,000
	IMPORTED	17,500	11,300	9,400	38,200
	TOTAL	18,800	52,700	19,600	91,200
1994	DOMESTIC	300	33,800	10,200	44,300
	IMPORTED	25,300	16,100	14,300	55,700
	TOTAL	25,600	49,900	24,500	100,000
1989-93 Average	DOMESTIC	2,300	29,400	15,300	46,900
	IMPORTED	20,100	21,500	12,700	54,300
	TOTAL	22,400	50,900	28,000	101,200

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

yellowfin tuna receipts not quite offsetting a considerable decrease in skipjack tuna receipts.

Domestic deliveries to canneries were down by 2% in American Samoa and California and down by 45% in Puerto Rico. Skipjack tuna was easily the largest component of all domestic deliveries at 33,800 st, followed by yellowfin tuna, 10,200 st, and albacore, 300 st. Domestic deliveries accounted for 44% of the tuna delivered to U.S. canners during the first quarter of the year.

Albacore was the leading import for the first quarter of 1994 at 25,300 st, followed by skipjack and yellowfin at 16,100 st and 14,300 st, respectively (Table 3). The leading supplier was Taiwan, with 26% of the import market, followed by France and Spain, with 16% and 10% of the market, respectively. The western Pacific Ocean was the main source of all three important tuna species (Table 4): albacore (41,500 st), skipjack tuna (13,100 st) and yellowfin tuna (11,200 st).

Contract prices for domestically caught tuna delivered to U.S. canners in the first quarter of 1994 were considerably higher than the 1993 first quarter prices for all categories of fish (Table 5). Maximum prices (not adjusted for inflation) have increased in each of the past six quarters, reversing a downward trend that started in 1988. Between the first quarter of 1988 and the fourth quarter of 1992, prices fell approximately 40%; prices now stand approximately 8% to 10% below their 1988 levels.

U.S. imports of canned tuna packed in water totaled 59,800 st for the first quarter of 1994, up 51% from 1993. As of July 10, 1994, imports of canned tuna stood at 80,600 st, up 41% from the previous year.

U.S. TUNA FISHERIES UPDATE

EASTERN PACIFIC TROPICAL TUNA FISHERY

During the period January through June 1994, 12 U.S. tuna purse seiners participated in the eastern tropical Pacific tuna fishery and caught an estimated 8,500 metric tons (mt) of yellowfin tuna and 7,300 mt of skipjack tuna (Figure 1). The yellowfin tuna catch was up 21% from the 1993 catch (7,000 mt), and the skipjack tuna catch was down 22% from the 1993 catch (9,400 mt). The fleet continues to be affected by "dolphin safe" policies and concentrated its effort on tunas

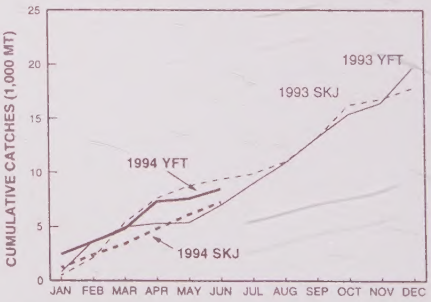

Figure 1. Cumulative tuna catches, by month, for the U.S. eastern Pacific purse seine fishery, 1993 and 1994.

Table 3. U.S. cannery imports (st) of tuna by species and source (flag of catcher vessel) for the first quarter of 1994. Totals for the first quarter of 1993 are given for comparison. Note that the flag of the catcher vessel does not necessarily reflect the country of export or point of shipment. Totals may not add due to rounding.

VESSEL FLAG	1994				1993
	Albacore	Skipjack	Yellowfin[1]	TOTAL	TOTAL
ECUADOR	0	600	1,500	2,100	600
F.S. MICRONESIA	0	500	200	700	3,800
FRANCE	400	2,200	6,200	8,700	8,300
GHANA	0	1,500	*	1,500	1,200
JAPAN	4,200	*	0	4,300	5,600
NEW ZEALAND	1,300	0	0	1,300	700
PANAMA	400	1,300	400	2,200	1,300
PORTUGAL	2,000	0	0	2,000	*
SOLOMON ISLANDS	0	800	600	1,400	0
SOUTH AFRICA	3,100	0	0	3,100	1,600
SOUTH KOREA	300	2,400	900	3,600	1,000
SPAIN	600	3,500	1,600	5,700	600
TAIWAN	12,800	500	1,200	14,600	10,700
USA	0	500	300	700	*
VENEZUELA	0	700	500	1,200	0
UNKNOWN	0	1,100	500	1,600	0
OTHER	100	500	300	900	2,700
TOTAL	25,300	16,100	14,300	55,700	38,200

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

Table 4. Receipts (st) of tuna by U.S. canneries by species and area of capture for the first quarters of 1993 and 1994. Totals may not add due to rounding.

SOURCE	Albacore		Skipjack		Yellowfin[1]	
	1993	1994	1993	1994	1993	1994
E. ATLANTIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	0	0	0	0	0
IMPORTED	2,800	2,900	3,900	7,400	7,500	2,600
TOTAL	2,800	2,900	3,900	7,400	7,500	2,600
W. ATLANTIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	*	0	0	0	0	0
IMPORTED	3,000	*	100	2,200	800	500
TOTAL	3,100	*	100	2,200	800	500
E. PACIFIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	600	4,700	3,500	0	1,900	2,700
IMPORTED	200	1,200	700	200	700	1,500
TOTAL	800	5,900	4,200	200	2,700	4,200
W. PACIFIC OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	700	36,700	6,700	300	31,900	7,500
IMPORTED	10,200	4,800	1,700	12,800	5,800	3,700
TOTAL	10,900	41,500	8,400	13,100	37,700	11,200
INDIAN OCEAN						
DOMESTIC	0	0	0	0	0	0
IMPORTED	1,300	2,300	3,000	2,600	1,400	5,900
TOTAL	1,300	2,300	3,000	2,600	1,400	5,900

*Less than 100 st reported for this category.

[1]May include a small amount of bigeye tuna.

not associated with dolphins. The 1994 U.S. allowable quota of 114 dolphin mortalities, established by the U.S. International Dolphin Conservation Act, was reached on February 7. Since then, the taking of dolphins by U.S. tuna purse seiners in the eastern tropical Pacific is prohibited for the remainder of the year.

WESTERN PACIFIC TROPICAL TUNA FISHERY

For the period January through May 1994, 42 U.S. tuna purse seiners were registered to fish in the western tropical Pacific under the South Pacific Tuna Treaty. This fleet landed an estimated 37,500 mt of skipjack tuna and 5,300 mt of yellowfin and bigeye tuna for the period (Figure 2). The skipjack tuna landings were down 36% from the 1993 landings for the same period (58,300 mt) and the combined yellowfin and bigeye tuna landings were down 71% (from 18,300 mt). *(Report provided by Doug Prescott, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, CA)*

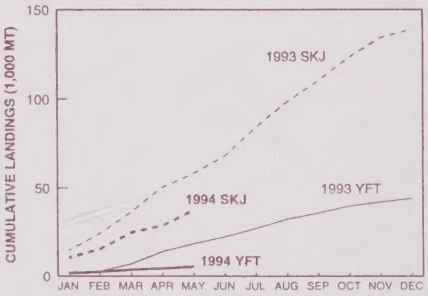

Figure 2. Cumulative tuna landings, by month, for the U.S. western tropical Pacific purse seine fishery, 1993 and 1994.

NORTHERN PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY

The 1994 U.S. north Pacific albacore troll season began in May near the Emperor Seamounts, northwest of Hawaii. Catches of up to 2 mt of fish per day were reported by the U.S. fleet through June. The average weight of fish caught was approximately 11 kg. Biologists from the SWFSC were aboard two of

Table 5. Contract price ranges (U.S. $ per st) for skipjack and yellowfin tuna for delivery to U.S. canneries in American Samoa and Puerto Rico by U.S. vessels arriving from trips in the first quarters 1993 and 1994.

SIZE CLASS (lbs.)	SKIPJACK		YELLOWFIN	
	1993	1994	1993	1994
<3	190-327	485-565	190-327	485-565
3 to 4	390-527	685-765	390-527	685-765
4 to 7.5	585-722	880-960	585-722	880-960
7.5 to 20	635-772	930-1,010	645-782	940-1,020
>20	---	---	765-902	1,060-1,140

Table 6. U.S. commercial landings of Atlantic bluefin tuna for 1994 through July 8.

Category	# of Fish	Avg. Wt. (lbs.)	Gross Wt. (mt)	Quota (mt)
GENERAL	61	309.3	8.56	531
Handline	4	342.8	0.62	
Rod & Reel	37	294.8	4.95	
Harpoon	20	329.4	2.99	
HARPOON	28	322.1	4.09	53
INCIDENTAL	307	535.3	74.53	
N. Longline	59	424.5	11.36	23
S. Longline	246	564.3	62.96	86
Other	2	234.0	0.21	4
PURSE SEINE	0	0.0	0.00	301
Giant	0	0.0	0.00	
Large Medium	0	0.0	0.00	
TOTAL	396	485.4	87.18	998

these U.S. vessels. Several more biologists will be aboard vessels departing for the fishing grounds in August. *(Report provided by John Childers, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, CA)*

SOUTHERN PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY

The 1993-94 south Pacific albacore fishery began in late December 1993 and concluded in April 1994. A total of 13 U.S. troll vessels participated in the fishery. Preliminary landings information indicates approximately 575 mt were delivered to canneries in American Samoa. Landings appear to be heading for another record low year, compared to the 1992-93 season when 1,028 mt were landed by 62 vessels. Logbook data from the season indicate slightly better catch rates than for the 1992-93 season. Oceanographic conditions are blamed by some for the poor albacore season in 1993-94. *(Report provided by John Childers, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, CA)*

WESTERN ATLANTIC BLUEFIN TUNA FISHERY

As of July 8, the total U.S. commercial landing of Atlantic bluefin tuna for 1994 stood at 87 mt. The 1994 season opening dates by category are longline, January 1; general, June 1; harpoon, June 1; and purse seine, August 15. The minimum commercial size to harvest and sell Atlantic bluefin tuna is 70 inches straight fork length. A straight measurement is taken from the tip of the snout to the fork in the tail using either calipers or a straight measuring instrument. Atlantic bluefin tuna may be landed round with fins intact or eviscerated with the head and fins removed, except that one pectoral fin and the tail must remain intact.

A summary of cumulative 1994 U.S. Atlantic bluefin tuna landings as of July 8 is given in Table 6. *(Report provided by Kevin B. Foster, NMFS Northeast Region, Gloucester, MA)*

REPORTS

Editor's note: Original reports are published as a service to subscribers and may not represent the views of the NMFS. Readers should contact the authors of reports for details, if needed.

REVIEW OF THE U. S. PURSE SEINE FISHERY FOR TROPICAL TUNAS IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

Atilio L. Coan Jr. and Douglas Prescott, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, P.O. Box 271, La Jolla, CA 92038

U.S. purse seiners started fishing in the western Pacific for tropical tunas in 1976, when 3 vessels conducted exploratory fishing operations in the area. Since that time, the fishery rapidly expanded to over 60 vessels in 1983 and 1984. Vessel participation decreased, however, to 32 vessels in 1988, the year the U.S. and 16 Pacific island nations entered into the South Pacific Regional Tuna Treaty. The Treaty placed a limit of 40 U.S. vessels for 1988-93, and 55 vessels since then to participate in the fishery. The treaty also specified license fees for vessels and requirements for submission of logbook and landings data.

Tuna landings from the U.S. western Pacific purse seine fleet increased rapidly from 700 mt in 1976, to over 169,000 mt in 1984. Since

the start of the Treaty, landings have reached a new high of 208,000 mt in 1992, before dropping to 180,000 mt in 1993. Skipjack tuna landings dominated and accounted for over 70% of the landings (Figure 3). Approximately 30% of the total western Pacific purse seine caught yellowfin and skipjack tuna is made by the U.S. fleet. The remainder is primarily landed by purse seiners of Japan, Taiwan, Korea and the Philippines.

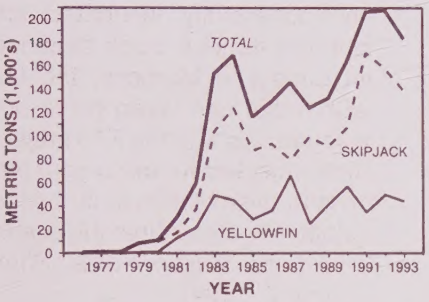

Figure 3. Landings of skipjack and yellowfin tunas from U.S. purse seiners fishing in the western Pacific Ocean.

Data collected since the start of the Treaty show that the U.S. purse seine fleet fished areas mainly around Papua New Guinea in 1988 and 1989, and since 1990, areas between Kiribati and Tuvalu. While the fleet made sets on both floating objects (log sets) and free-swimming schools (school sets), over 70% of the catches were from school sets.

Average trip lengths for the U.S. fleet, between 67 and 77 days at-sea in 1988 and 1989, decreased to 49 days at-sea in 1991 and then increased slightly to 56 days at-sea in 1993. The increase in trip lengths since 1991 may be due to the enforcement of the Treaty's restriction of "at-sea transshipment" of catch.

Overall catch rates (yellowfin and skipjack tuna combined) for the U.S. fleet increased from 18 mt/day in 1988 to a peak of 30 mt/day in 1991, before decreasing to 24 mt/day in 1993. This decrease is largely due to the decrease in the rate of skipjack catch as the yellowfin tuna catch rates have held relatively stable since 1991 at approximately 6 mt/day.

Sizes of fish caught by the U.S. fleet have been constant. Yellowfin tuna catches have ranged from 35 to 147 cm in fork length with two strong modes, one at approximately 55 cm and another at 107 cm. Skipjack tuna catches have ranged between 30 to 80 cm with modes at approximately 45 and 65 cm. In general, fish caught in school sets were larger than those in log sets.

Data collected from the U.S. fleet so far in 1994 indicate that the fishery progressed at a normal pace and according to a typical season. However, in June the fleet moved farther east to areas around Jarvis Island where schools of large yellowfin between 100 and 150 cm long were fished. In 1990, this area similarly produced large yellowfin tuna, but in January. If good fishing for large yellowfin tuna persists for the rest of the year, the yellowfin tuna catch for 1994 could equal the record of 1992. However, the overall total yellowfin and skipjack tuna catch for 1994 is expected to remain close to 200,000 mt.

An abstract from a recently published paper written by a SWFSC scientist is presented in this space to announce its availability and to report results of tuna research conducted by Center staff.

RECENT SWFSC PUBLICATION: "ESTIMATED DRIFT GILLNET SELECTIVITY FOR ALBACORE, *THUNNUS ALALUNGA*"

N. Bartoo and D. Holts. Published in U.S. Fishery Bulletin 91(2):371-378

The North and South Pacific drift gillnet (DGN) fisheries have exerted a substantial, but as yet unknown, mortality on albacore, *Thunnus alalunga*, populations. Several DGN experimental surveys conducted in these oceans have produced data on albacore distribution and gear selectivity. Knowledge of DGN selectivity is useful for applying complex population-dynamics techniques to the albacore population. In 1984-85 the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) undertook an experiment to quantify DGN mesh-size selectivity for albacore. The experiment produced size-selectivity data for a single mesh size used in the U.S. DGN commercial fishery for albacore (184 mm) in the eastern North Pacific Ocean. Other experiments designed to sample albacore, using other mesh sizes which produced complementary data used in this study, were conducted by the Japan Marine Fishery Resource Center in 1980 (JAMARC 1983), 1982 (JAMARC 1985), and 1983 (JAMARC 1986). The objective of the SWFSC analysis was to quantify drift gillnet mesh-size selectivity for albacore, using existing data collected from various experiments and surveys in the Pacific Ocean.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TUNA FISHERIES

Editor's note: The following news items, compiled from fishery trade and industry journals, newspapers and NMFS reports, are provided only as a service to our readers. The NMFS does not guarantee their accuracy.

EASTERN PACIFIC

Peru Invites Tuna Boats Back-- Peru is inviting foreign tuna boats to its rich grounds this year after contradictory and confusing regulations chased them away in 1982. The ministry of fisheries will allocate permits to local and foreign tuna ships with a total 6,000 registered net tonnage to operate in Peruvian waters during the 1994-95 season. The turnaround follows the publication in the official gazette, *El Peruaño*, on

March 20 of detailed regulations on migratory tuna stocks fished off Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela. Foreign tuna ships fished off Peru, mainly in the north coast's Mancora grounds, in the 1970s and early 1980s. In the peak year of 1980 the ministry of fisheries issued 144 permits. Latest regulations include the compulsory use by purse seiners of dolphin-free nets. The ministry of fisheries will issue dolphin-free certificates mandatory for exporting to the U.S. and Europe, and priority will be given to longliners over purse seiners. (*Fishing News International*, June 1994)

Peru Levies Fees on Tuna Boats--Tuna companies in Peru claim that it is impossible to operate under the fees to be levied under new tuna fishing legislation. They also complain that local boats will be charged the same fee as foreign vessels. Previously, local companies did not have to pay for fishing rights. The government says, however, that equal fees for local and foreign companies are aimed at developing healthy competition in the country's fishing industry. The ministry has set the price of six-month tuna fishing permits at $500 per registered net tonnage. Regulations also allow the ministry to set fishing rights for foreign ships through bids, bilateral fishing agreements, and accords between the fisheries ministry and private foreign entities. A fisheries consultant said that the charge by net tonnage is actually lower than the fees paid in other countries because net tonnage is less than half of a vessel's overall capacity. He forecasts that fees may increase once tuna fishing builds up. Boat owners must also pay fines on every ton of tuna associated species, such as swordfish and marlin, landed in excess of five percent of the tuna catch. (*Fishing News International*, June 1994)

Mexican Tuna Catch Declines--Mexican tuna fishermen caught less tuna in the eastern tropical Pacific (ETP) during the first three months of 1994 than during the same period in 1993. They harvested about 29,000 metric tons of tuna, mostly yellowfin, through March 1994. During the same period in 1993, Mexican tuna fishermen caught over 33,000 mt of tuna. Mexico's total share of the ETP catch also declined during the first quarter of 1994. While Mexico caught 38% of the tuna taken in the ETP during January through March 1993, Mexico's portion of the first-quarter 1994 catch represented only 32% of the total ETP tuna catch as a result of expanding catches by Ecuador and other Latin American countries. Mexican fishermen have apparently reduced fishing effort because of marketing problems in both Europe and Mexico. Tuna canneries in Italy and Spain stopped importing Mexican ETP yellowfin tuna during late 1992 after adopting "dolphin-safe" tuna purchasing policies. Mexican companies have expanded domestic tuna sales in recent years and now sell over 100,000 mt of tuna annually, but the domestic market cannot absorb all of the product formerly exported to Europe. (NMFS, May 23, 1994)

WESTERN PACIFIC

Japanese Bluefin Tuna Research--The Fisheries Agency of Japan is continuing its bluefin tuna stock enhancement research in Amami Oshima, located in Kagoshima Prefecture in southern Kyushu. Wild-caught bluefin tuna are being kept in pens, and are expected to spawn when they reach 5 years of age in 1995. FAJ researchers plan to artificially incubate the tuna fry and then raise them to juvenile stage before finally releasing them into the ocean. Private Japanese companies are also conducting research on bluefin tuna at Amami Oshima. Maruha Corporation (formerly Taiyo) began a bluefin tuna farming project in 1987. Maruha researchers successfully incubated and hatched bluefin tuna eggs in 1992 and 1993, but have thus far been unable to raise tuna beyond this stage. The main reason for this failure has been severe typhoons which struck southern Kyushu in both 1992 and 1993. Maruha researchers remain confident, however, and hope to eventually raise bluefin tuna to a length of one meter and a weight of 40 kg before shipment to Japanese wholesale markets. In a related development, the Japanese Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation has announced that bluefin tuna fry have been successfully incubated and hatched at its joint stock enhancement project in Morocco, the first time that this has taken place outside Japan. As with the FAJ project, the final objective for this 5-year program is to raise bluefin tuna to juvenile stage for release into the ocean. (NMFS from *Suisan Keizai Shimbun*, June 2, 1994)

Indonesia Buys New Tuna Vessels--Indonesia and Spain are negotiating the purchase of 26 new distant-water refrigerated tuna longliners. The Spanish shipbuilding industry has recently been influenced by an infusion of Japanese technology, and the longliners under discussion are modeled after a Japanese 45-meter, 379-GRT distant-water tuna longliner. The cost of each longliner is said to be between $40-45 million. During 1990-94, Spain built 75 refrigerated tuna longliners in the 200-500 GRT range. Indonesia has maintained a refrigerated tuna longliner fleet of approximately 50 vessels since the end of 1991. It is unclear whether the 26 new vessels will replace aged vessels or will be added to the existing fleet. (NMFS from *Nikkan Suisan Keizai Shimbun*, March 22, 1994)

Japan-China Tuna Operations in Palau--The Japanese trading company, IASS, has signed a contract with the China National Fisheries Corporation (CNFC) to charter 200 small Chinese tuna vessels (each 50-150 GRT) for operations in Palau during 1994. These vessels will fish for the local Japanese-

owned Palau International Traders Incorporated and the Palau-owned Palau Marine Industries Corporation. After the contract was signed, the CNFC instructed provincial Chinese fishery corporations to send their vessels to Palau. Some Chinese vessels are already en route and are expected to commence fishing shortly. It was originally expected that 300 Chinese vessels would be chartered, but this number was reduced to 200 vessels to maximize the efficiency of operations. Tuna caught by these vessels will be flown exclusively to IASS for sale on the Japanese fresh tuna market. The first shipment was expected to arrive in Japan during the early May "Golden Week" holidays. IASS expects to import an average of 500 mt of tuna per month from its Palau operation for an annual import total of approximately 4,000 mt. (NMFS from *Suisan Keizai Shinbun*, April 12, 1994)

Tuna Port in Two Years--The Philippines is expecting to gain a significant share of tuna processing in the East Asian region when the 25-hectare fishing port, storage and processing facility in General Santos City is completed in the next two years. The port will have 750-meter landing quay for small to medium fishing boats and a 300-meter wharf for 2,000-ton refrigerated carriers. Included in the port complex will be a 1,500-ton cold store facility for tuna; brine, air blast and contact freezers; and an ice plant with a capacity of 60 tons a day. In addition, a 20-ha site for tuna canners and processors is being made available. At present tuna ships face long trips from the fishing grounds to Thailand's big canners, but the new port in the Philippines would cut trip lengths significantly. Indonesia is also building a fish processing facility in Sulawesi, but its location will require fishing vessels to make an expensive trip from the grounds into the Sulawesi coast. (*Fishing News International*, June 1994)

EASTERN ATLANTIC

Chinese Tuna Fishery in the East Atlantic--The Japanese fisheries press reported that four Chinese large-scale distant-water tuna vessels (300-400 GRT, presumably longliners) are fishing for bigeye and yellowfin tuna in the eastern Atlantic. The vessels are based in Las Palmas and Dakar, Senegal. Their catch, approximately 200 mt, has been transshipped to Japanese freezer transport vessels and should arrive in Japan by July 1994. A South Korean company reportedly sold used tuna vessels to the Chinese company and is also supplying technical and marketing assistance. There are also unconfirmed reports of other Chinese large-scale distant-water vessels fishing in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. (NMFS from *Nikkan Suisan Keizai Shimbun*, June 9, 1994)

WESTERN ATLANTIC

Atlantic Bluefin to be Surveyed--An aerial survey of the Gulf of Maine will begin this summer to help estimate the number of bluefin tuna in the Northwest Atlantic for the purpose of developing a better management plan. The project is a cooperative effort by bluefin tuna fishermen, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the New England Aquarium, which will share costs and expertise. The purpose of the survey is to produce reliable data on which to base quotas for U.S. bluefin fishermen, according to Rep. Gerry Studds, who sponsored legislation calling for greater cooperation from other nations in the conservation of Atlantic bluefin. "Bluefin tuna fishermen in New England have consistently reduced catches for conservation, while fishermen in the eastern Atlantic continue to fish unchecked," he says. "Before we require further quota reductions of our own fishermen, we must be certain we are basing our decisions on the most accurate and reliable data." (*National Fisherman*, August 1994)

UPCOMING TUNA MEETINGS

(Organizer; meeting type: sci=science, adm=administration)

- AUG 1-3. ASEAN-PIN Tuna Research Workshop. Manila, Philippines. (Western Pacific Fisheries Consultative Committee; sci)
- AUG 5-8. Meeting of the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish. Koror, Palau. (South Pacific Commission; sci)
- AUG 9-11. Meetings of the Western Pacific Yellowfin Tuna Research Groups. Koror, Palau. (SPC; sci)
- OCT 31-NOV 4. Meeting of the Species Group of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS). Madrid, Spain. (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas; sci)
- NOV 21-25. Meeting of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics. Madrid, Spain. (ICCAT; sci)
- NOV 27-DEC 2. Annual Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. Madrid, Spain. (ICCAT; adm)
- DEC 5-9. Multilateral High-Level Conference on South Pacific Tuna Fisheries. Honiara, Solomon Islands. (Forum Fisheries Agency; adm)
- DEC 11-14. International Symposium on Pacific Swordfish. Ensenada, Mexico. (Ensenada Center of Scientific Investigations and Higher Education (CICESE) and SWFSC; sci)
- JAN 23-31. Second FAO Expert Consultation on Interactions of Pacific Tuna Fisheries. Shimizu, Japan. (FAO; sci)

EUROPE

UK and German Canned Tuna Imports--Imports of canned tuna by the United Kingdom increased by 3% last year to over 8 million cartons of 48x6.5-oz. cans, in contrast to a drop in imports of all other major types of canned fish over the 1992 period. The European Union's imposition of import quotas from third countries was initially a threat to the UK's supply of canned tuna, but the UK was given sufficient licenses to import, and several traders were already importing from ACP countries which are exempt from the EU quota. Though imports were down from Thailand, shipments from the Philippines and Indonesia were up in 1993. Exports from Ecuador increased almost five fold. Germany, on the other hand suffered a setback with an 18% drop in imports. Licenses to German importers to buy tuna from Asian suppliers were reduced by the EU, a result of an earlier dispute over imports of canned bonito. Indonesian and Philippine shipments were greatly affected. Supplies from Thailand remained stable. Tuna imports may recover slightly with more licenses this year. (INFOFISH *Trade News*, June 16, 1994)

Southwest Regional Office

501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

Rodney McInnis, Acting Director

Southwest Fisheries Science Center

8604 La Jolla Shore Drive--P.O. Box 271
La Jolla, California 92038-0271

Michael F. Tillman, Science and Research Director, Southwest Region
Gary Sakagawa, Tuna Program Coordinator

PUBLICATION STAFF

Alan Jackson, Production
David Au, Reports
Ken Raymond, Art Director
Karen Handschuh, Circulation

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
SOUTHWEST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER
8604 LA JOLLA SHORES DR.- P.O. BOX 271
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA 92038-0271

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